

MAURYCY BLOCH

Day of VI.11.1940¹

[1/1] My Dearest Willy!

[1/2] I am in much despair over the situation in Europe and I don't know what to do with my [1/3] family.

[1/4] My mother and Dorusia and Grandpa and Janek, and Jozio are in Biarritz². They have Nicaraguan [1/5] visas, but Spain and Portugal will not give them passes. [1/6] Therefore it's hard to help them. All the recommendations from US consuls are worthless. [1/7] Besides that, everyone's accounts were closed and that's why I need to mail them money. Our house in Paris is now [1/8] worth a negative one dollar.

[1/9] My heart is heavy and I swear that I've lost my [1/10] humor for the first time in my life. It's the end of the world.

[1/11] Rozia sends me pleading telegrams from Lwow, asking me to get her out. Ditto with my [1/12] second aunt, Dori, the wife of Janek. I can't help them despite the fact that I sent them visas [1/13] and money. None of them arrived in the mail.

[1/14] Now my situation is starting to get serious. All of our fortune went to the devil, [1/15] with the exception of what we have here. But now you know dear Willy that a fortune [1/16] is good, until it gets eaten up. And even if 25 people will live off of it, [1/17] most modestly, then all of it will go to hell anyway.

[1/18] I'm working very hard here. The factory is off and working and we'll annually [1/19] produce 500 tons of Cerezine and 700 tons of Ozokerite, valued in the neighborhood of [1/20] half a million dollars. We'll have plenty of clean profit from all of this, but one more thing: it's [1/21] plenty for a single family, but a little for so many people.

[1/22] Inter America will shortly begin to bring in profits. In Nicaragua, there is a slogan, that [1/23] whoever does not buy through us, does not get money from Managua. Besides [1/24] this we have plenty of merchandise and an increasing amount of good propositions. Even if this [1/25] undertaking will go well, I'll only have enough money to keep Freddy at Harvard [1/26] and for myself. Willy, I'm not exaggerating. My mother's and sister's money [1/27] is in cash and jewelry, that way they'll always have money, but what should I do about the [1/28] rest??

[1/29] Marian is also trying hard—but you know from your own experience how hard it [1/30] is to make it here. So long Paris was still Paris we weren't worried about [1/31] investing, but now?

¹ This letter was written several days before the fall of Paris, 15 June 1940. It appears that at this point Mr. Bloch was convinced of the imminence of the fall.

² Biarritz is a large town with several quarters and is one of the principal resorts on the Côte Basque. Biarritz came to fame in the mid 19th Century, when Empress Eugenie (the wife of Napoleon III) fell in love with this part of the Basque country and built a Palace on the beach at Eugenie les Bains in the Landes. Eugenie invited foreign royalty to stay with their entourages and courtiers; Queen Victoria of Britain, who came regularly over a period of 30 years, and sundry Spanish, Swedish, Dutch, German, Russian nobility.

[1/32] This is why I'd like to buy a farm with chickens (about 5000 hens). Now that's a good business. [1/33] Get a nice house with it and about 200 acres, and settle the family there. You always get [1/34] dough from a farm, and that's the only thing I'm concerned with right now. [1/35] It's a shame that I'm without you, because you always did find a way to put me back [1/36] together again. [1/37] Please write something about what you're doing—and what do you think about the situation? [1/38] I am despairing and tired, and don't feel like myself, but like a [1/39] worried Jew. Over two years from the fortune in Vienna, Poland, Paris [1/40] and Switzerland, only memories remain. All went to hell, but [1/41] Paris really got to me. Until now I tried to move Lwow to Niece, and [1/42] now I'm trying to move Biarritz to Managua. [1/43] Sincere kisses—always yours,
Maurycy